LIBRARY

The Manor House,
Totnes.

5th November, 1951.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH LIBRARY

Mr. Mayor, Alderman and Councillors,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1950.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

Estimated Population (mid-year 1950)	5,670.
Number of inhabited houses.....	1,700.

VITAL STATISTICS.

	Male.	Female.	Total.
Live Births.	44	45	89
Legitimate.	40	43	
Illegitimate.	4	2	
Still Births.			3

		England & Wales.
Birth Rate per 1,000 Population ..	15.7	15.8

	Male.	Female.	Total.
Deaths	40	44	84

		England & Wales.
Death Rate per 1,000 Population ..	14.8	11.6

Deaths from maternal causes	Nil.
Deaths of infants under 1 year of age	6

The causes of the deaths are as follows:-

Infective and Parasitic Diseases ..	1
Cancer	11
Cerebral Haemorrhage	6
Heart Disease	32
Pneumonia	6
Bronchitis	3
Ulcer of Stomach & Duodenum	1
Nephritis & Nephrosis	1
Congenital Malformation	1
Other defined & ill-defined diseases	20
Motor Vehicle Accidents	1
Suicide	1

The age group 65 and over accounted for 57 deaths out of a total of 84.

There was no death from tuberculosis during the year.

INFECTIOUS & OTHER NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.

The classification of the above is as follows:-

Tuberculosis	2
Acute Pneumonia	2
Erysipelas	2
Scarlet Fever	7
Dysentery	8
Malaria	1
Food Poisoning (Salmonella group)	177
TOTAL	199

As will be seen from the above classification, there was no epidemic of the commoner infections. A widespread outbreak of food poisoning accounts for the great increase in the number of notified cases this year.

FOOD POISONING.

An outbreak of food poisoning, explosive in type, occurred in Totnes and the surrounding district in June. 177 cases were notified from within the Borough, and the rural districts received an additional 100 notifications (the figures for the districts are approximate only).

The outbreak was due to the contamination of cream filling for cakes by the food poisoning organism Salmonella Typhimurium. After a thorough investigation the conclusion was reached that the infection had originated from duck eggs. These were not used in the preparation of the cream but had been added to a sponge mixture, the mixing of which had immediately preceded that of the cream. It was assumed that the mixing bowl still held traces of the sponge cake mixture when the cream was mixed. Unfortunately it was not possible to obtain any eggs for examination, as all the eggs from the particular case in use at the time had been used up.

Further spread of the infection was controlled by the exclusion from work of those food handlers affected by the organism, and there were 30 of them. Of these, 21 submitted specimens and, with the exception of one, all were positive. Repeated specimens were sent up to the Laboratory and in a very short time - rather less than three weeks - the necessary number of negative tests wasobtained. In order to bring the investigation to a satisfactory conclusion, I managed to prevail upon some of those who had originally submitted positive specimens to have their excreta examined at intervals spread over a period of three months.The results showed that when the specimens became negative they remained negative and the danger of carrier infection was eliminated.

INFANTILE PARALYSIS.

Fortunately there has been no case of infantile paralysis notified during the year, despite the fact that a considerable number of cases have occurred within a short distance of the Borough.

IMMUNISATION AGAINST DIPHTHERIA.

Once again I have to report that no case of diphtheria had been notified, thanks entirely to the protection obtained from inoculation. This work has been faithfully carried out by the general practitioners, the school medical officers and the medical officer of the Child Welfare Centre. It is difficult to give exact figures compared with the child population, owing to the fact that the immunisation is undertaken

after the child has reached the age of six months; but it is certain that we, in Totnes, can boast that almost 100 per cent. of the children have received the required course of injections. There are very few refusals.

VACCINATION.

Compared with other areas, I think I may say that our vaccination figure is high, but I have no comparative figures available. The work is done by the general practitioners.

HOSPITAL ACCOMMODATION.

Beds for acute cases are available at the Totnes Hospital and the more chronic cases are accommodated at the Broomborough Hospital. The demand for beds for chronic cases has been great and there has been a long waiting list, but the position tends to ease rather than worsen. The standard of efficiency in both hospitals is high despite staff difficulties.

MATERNITY & CHILD WELFARE.

Maternity cases are accommodated at Broomborough Hospital in the well equipped unit set aside for the purpose. Expectant mothers preferring to stay at home are able to do so, and are encouraged to do so where circumstances permit.

NURSING.

The district is covered by two district nurses, both of whom aremidwives. They have taken the prescribed course in anaesethetics and are equipped with the necessary apparatus for obtaining analgesia in confinement cases.

AMBULANCE.

The ambulance service - as always an efficient day and night service - is supplied by the St. John Ambulance Association, and two ambulances are available.

HOME HELPS.

Such a service does exist though perhaps it is not really adequate. There are three part-time helps available for maternity and other cases of illness.

HOUSING.

During the past year the Corporation has completed twenty houses at Swallowfields of the Cornish Unit type, and work is commencing shortly on the site at Pathfields for the erection of a further forty-four houses, which will be started during the next year. Now that the housing situation has eased somewhat, the Corporation is considering bringing certain sections of the Housing Act of 1936 into force again.

WATER SUPPLY.

The scheme which was designed in 1934 has, during the past year, worked quite satisfactorily, but at times the pumps in connection with this scheme were taxed to their utmost capacity. The Corporation is considering an extension to this scheme in the very near future.

The purification works operated quite satisfactorily, and a pure supply of water was obtained.

CATERING AND FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS.

These have been periodically inspected. With a view to emphasising the necessity for cleanliness in the preparation and handling of food, a meeting of food traders was arranged. A most instructive lecture was given by Dr. Moore, bacteriologist, of the Public Health Laboratory, Exeter. The meeting was very well attended.

SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

During the past year the Bacon Factory in the town has extended its operations and is now supplying several varieties of cooked meats and pork. The conditions here are excellent and the work people seem to realise their responsibilities.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS.

These have been periodically inspected and there have been no additions during the past year, although the Sanitary Inspector is dealing with several cases for increased W.C. and washing accommodation.

In conclusion I wish to thank the Mayor and Corporation for their ready co-operation at all times.

Elizabeth Davies.

Medical Officer of Health.